STATUS REPORT

IMPAIRED DRIVING PROGRAM

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IMPAIRED DRIVING STATUS REPORT
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I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1988, the Department of the Solicitor General, with responsibility for the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee, and its mandate in the areas of law enforcement, driver management and corrections, has coordinated Alberta's impaired driving initiatives under the direction of the Government of Alberta. The Impaired Driving Program has now been in operation for four years.

This status report represents the progress that has taken place in the fourth year of the Department's strategy to combat impaired driving in Alberta. The report details new initiatives implemented in 1991-92, as well as any changes occurring in established programs. Other countermeasures, such as Checkstop, Contract for Life, "The Party's Over" video, although not specifically mentioned here, are ongoing.

II. ENFORCEMENT

A. Vehicle Immobilization

In 1991/92 the Vehicle Immobilization Program expanded to Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie and St. Albert, while continuing to operate in Calgary, Edmonton, Lacombe, Redcliff, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge.

Under this program a clamping device is installed, for a maximum of 24 hours, on the wheel of a vehicle driven by a person charged with impaired driving. The device prevents individuals from immediately recovering the vehicle and committing another impaired driving offence within 24 hours.

In addition to serving as an enforcement method, the impact of seeing an immobilization device on a vehicle serves as a deterrent to other drivers, because it is a visible reminder that impaired driving is a crime.

In December 1991, the **Motor Vehicle Administration Act** was revised so that it is no longer necessary for a police officer to reasonably suspect that a motorist will commit another offence within 24 hours. The vehicle may be immobilized any time a driver is charged with impaired driving or refusing to provide a breath or blood sample.

B. Ignition Interlock

The Ignition Interlock Program commenced operation in Edmonton in April 1990 and in Calgary in August 1990. The program currently targets first and second time offenders.

Under this program, the Driver Control Board may order the use of an alcohol sensing device (ignition interlock) on the vehicle of a previously convicted impaired driver, as a condition of licence reinstatement. Participation in the program may commence after the Court-imposed driving prohibition expires. Participation is limited by law to those convicted under sections 253 and 254 of the Criminal Code. The interlock device requires that drivers pass a breath alcohol test prior to starting their vehicles.

Since the program's inception, 447 individuals have been approved to participate. In fiscal year 1991-92, 331 individuals were placed on the program. During that time 84 individuals successfully completed the program and two people were revoked from the program.

Expansion of the eligibility criteria to include first time offenders is under consideration, but is dependent on the successful development of a new interlock device, which will be alcohol-specific.

C. Administrative Licence Suspension

An Administrative Licence Suspension Program has been in effect since August 1, 1989. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles continued to immediately refer all

cases of drivers charged with impaired driving causing death or bodily harm to the Driver Control Board for a determination as to whether to suspend driving privileges pending court decisions.

During the 1991-92 fiscal year a total of 56 hearings were scheduled, which resulted in 36 appearances. The twenty individuals who failed to appear were automatically suspended. Of the 36 cases that were heard, 11 resulted in licence suspensions pending the outcome of the court proceedings. The remaining twenty-four cases did not result in licence suspension, and one case was adjourned to a later date.

D. The Enhanced Impaired Driving Detection Program

The Enhanced Impaired Driving Detection Program was introduced in Alberta as a six month pilot project in December 1991. The program differs from random breath testing, as practised in parts of Australia, England and Scandinavia which allows police authorities to request preliminary breath samples from any and all drivers they stop. Police authorities in those jurisdictions need not suspect inebriation prior to requesting a breath sample. In Canada and the United States, however, police must have cause to request a breath sample. The Enhanced Impaired Driving Detection Program uses advanced technology to help police

officers make the determination that a driver has consumed alcohol. The device used is a passive alcohol sensor, which draws in normally expelled breath and analyzes it for alcohol. If the passive sensor, along with the officer's observations, indicate alcohol use by the driver an active breath sample using an Alert or Alco-Sur device may be requested.

The program, which is the first of its kind in Canada, will be evaluated in the summer of 1992. Results of the evaluation will be available in late 1992.

E. The Suspended Driver Vehicle Seizure Program

In an effort to reduce the number of individuals who continue to drive while their licence is suspended, in December 1991 the Department of the Solicitor General tabled legislation which introduced a Suspended Driver Vehicle Seizure Program. Under this program vehicles operated by a driver with a suspended licence are seized and impounded for 30 days. In addition, drivers may be fined up to $2,000, or jailed for not less than 14 days on the accompanying charge of Drive While Suspended.

If a motorist with a suspended licence borrows a vehicle and is caught driving, the vehicle will still be impounded. The vehicle owner faces a fine of up to $2,000, or a jail term of up to 14 days in default of payment, if it is shown that the owner knowingly lent the vehicle to a driver under suspension.

The program provides avenues for return of a vehicle to the registered owner if he was not aware that the individual he lent it to was suspended.

To inform the public about the new program, a communication plan and an advertising campaign were developed. The advertising campaign employed billboards, bus tails and brochures. Inserts were also mailed with all suspension notices.

This program relays the message that driving while suspended will not be tolerated and further, that strict enforcement will ensure adherence to the law.

III. EDUCATION/PREVENTION

A. Awards Program

The intent of the Department of the Solicitor General Awards Program is to provide tangible symbols of appreciation and to increase community involvement in reducing impaired driving. The Awards Program includes recognition plaques, certificates of appreciation and the Solicitor General's Award of Merit. Awards

are presented to citizens or groups involved either in Department programs or independent initiatives.

In December 1991, a Solicitor General Award was presented to a downtown Calgary liquor store in recognition of the initiative and imagination shown in the creation of a window display promoting the "Round Up the Party Animals" theme.

An appreciation luncheon was held for members of the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee in April 1991 to recognize their contributions to the development of the impaired driving initiatives.

Corporate sponsors including Coca-Cola, Shell, Labatt's, the Alberta Liquor Control Board, Inhouse Advertising, the Alberta Restaurant and Food Services Association and the Alberta Hotel Association were awarded plaques by the Solicitor General in September 1991, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the program.

IV. COMMUNITY ACTION

A. Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee

The Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee (IDCC) continued to act in an advisory capacity to the Solicitor General during the 1991-92 fiscal year. Membership of the IDCC consists of representatives from other government departments, community groups, private sector corporations and the public at large.

The IDCC continues to ensure:

- A coordinated multi-faceted approach to program development and public awareness campaigns;
- Government departments and private community groups involved in the prevention of impaired driving provide a consistent, and constant anti-drinking and driving message;
- The efficient use of financial resources in highly visible impaired driving campaigns; and
- The development of innovative campaigns and/or programs aimed at reducing impaired driving.

B. Grant Funding

Two forms of grant funding were again made available to community groups during the 1991-92 fiscal year. These are:

1. Department of Solicitor General Grants

   One time grants may be made available to community groups, or non-profit organizations engaged in organized volunteer initiatives, to prevent impaired driving in their communities. The grants facilitate the delivery of local activities which discourage drinking and driving.

2. Health and Welfare Grants

   The "Community Action Program On Impaired Driving" is a cooperative effort among all provincial and territorial governments and Health and Welfare Canada. The goal of the program is to reduce the social acceptability of impaired driving. All applications for grants must be consistent with health promotion priorities which support self care, mutual aid and the improvement of the environment.

   Individuals and groups are encouraged to find innovative ways to reduce society's acceptance of impaired driving. Priority is given to projects that involve local people and organizations. This grant program is administered by the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee on behalf of Health and Welfare Canada.

3. Grants Issued

   During the 1991-92 fiscal year, community grants were provided to:

   - Fort McMurray PARTY Program - To develop and deliver a Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (PARTY) program, which will increase awareness of the perils of drinking and driving.

   - Azimuth Theatre - To reproduce the Echo-Mortal play and script, and resource manual.

   - Kryton and Associates - To produce the "DeBriefing" audio presentation that investigates the consequences of drinking and driving. The program is aimed at students at the junior high and high school levels, as well as teachers, administrators and parents.

- PAID/REID Conference - To coordinate and deliver an Impaired Driving Conference to students from across the province.

- Alberta Server Intervention Program - To implement a training course for management and staff of licensed premises. The course will teach staff new ways of controlling customers' alcohol intake and hence reduce "over-serving" which can lead to a drinking and driving situation.

- PAID - To establish and implement a pilot Victim Impact Panel Program in Alberta. The program has victims of impaired drivers relate their stories in a non-confrontational manner to offenders incarcerated for impaired driving. The purpose of the program is to bring offenders face to face with the tragic consequences of their crimes.

C. Designated Driver Program

The Designated Driver Program continued its expansion during the 1991-92 fiscal year. As of January 1992, Alberta Liquor Control Board liquor inspectors assumed the role of liaison with licensed establishments on a province-wide basis. The inspectors promote and monitor the program as part of their regular visits. Involvement of inspectors allows the Department to reach a greater number of potential Designated Driver participants.

Developments that occured in the Designated Driver Program during the 1991-92 fiscal year included:

- All major corporate sponsors renewed their financial commitment to the Designated Driver Program for another year;

- A Designated Driver Program survey was commissioned through Mark Trend, a marketing research company. Mark Trend conducted structured telephone interviews with a random sample of Albertans, aged 18 and over;

- A Marketing Plan Status Report was completed in August 1991, which summarized accomplishments to that date, as well as program objectives to be met in the future;

- Corporate sponsors including Coca-Cola, Shell, Labatt's, the Alberta Liquor Control Board, Inhouse Advertising, the Alberta Restaurant and

Food Association and the Alberta Hotel Association were awarded plaques by the Solicitor General in September 1991, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the program;

- In December 1991, a Solicitor General Award was presented to a downtown Calgary liquor store in recognition of the initiative and imagination shown in the creation of a window display promoting the "Round Up the Party Animals" theme;

- The Designated Driver Program's commercial continues to be shown on television;

- Radio advertising for the Designated Driver Program continued in fiscal 1991-92 until October.

D. Report An Impaired Driver (RAID)

The RAID program, which commenced in June 1991, provides an avenue by which private citizens can report impaired drivers to the police. The program has been advertised using brochures and RAID posters displayed in retail outlets throughout Alberta.

The program has been positively received, particularly by People Against Impaired Driving and other interest groups that welcome public participation in the apprehension of impaired drivers.

An evaluation of the RAID program will be completed in September 1992.

V. PUBLIC AWARENESS

A. Brochures

The Report An Impaired Driver Program (RAID) and the Driving Under Suspension Program brochures were printed and distributed in June 1992, prior to the implementation of the programs.

B. Publications

During 1991-92, several magazine articles were written on the Department's impaired driving initiatives for national publications including Impact and West World. This cost efficient method of sharing information with colleagues and the

public will continue to be used.

C. Television

In addition to news conferences for the purpose of introducing new programs, time was secured on local talk shows, including "Day By Day", "Edmonton Live" and RDTV, and nationally on "CBC Newsworld", to highlight the Department's impaired driving initiatives.

D. Radio

Radio advertising for the Designated Driver Program continued in fiscal 1991-92 until October.

VI. RESEARCH

A. General Research

Ongoing research of impaired driving initiatives is an important component of the Department's overall impaired driving strategy. During the 1991-92 fiscal year, research was conducted on topic areas including ignition interlock program expansion and the use of public forums for developing impaired driving strategies.

B. Public Survey

A Designated Driver Program public awareness survey was conducted by Mark Trend, a marketing research firm. The telephone survey revealed that 68% of Albertans are aware of the existence of the Designated Driver Program. As well, more than half (54%) of Albertans surveyed had participated in the Designated Driver Program in the past.

C. Impaired Driving Statistical Analysis

A report entitled "Impaired Driving in Alberta: A Seven Year Perspective (1984-1990) was prepared and made available in March 1992. The report was compiled with the assistance of AADAC, Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Department of the Attorney General, and police services. The report provides an analysis of trends in alcohol-related traffic collisions, deaths and injuries, the number of persons charged with impaired driving, and punishment imposed, in Alberta. A description of countermeasures employed in Alberta is also included.

D. Impaired Driving Evaluation Report

In cooperation with the Internal Audit Branch of the Department of the Solicitor General, a report detailing an evaluation of the Impaired Driving Program was printed and distributed in March 1992.